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NATIONAL PARKS BULLETIN

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IN DEFENSE OF the Conservation of the National Parks System
IN PROMOTION OF its Development for Popular Education, the Cultivation of Patriotism and the Uses of Science, and
IN THE INTEREST OF Thousands of Organizations and Millions of Americans working together for these ends

ROBERT STERLING YARD, *Editor*

OUR NATIONAL PARKS AND THE NEW CONGRESS

A Statement of the National Policy Developed by Fifty-two Years of Government and Confirmed by Three Years of Popular Demand

ON THE eve of a Congress in which bills are expected for National Parks of less than standard quality, it is well to define again the National Policy created and developed by fifty-two years of Government, confirmed during the struggle of the last three years by remarkable demonstrations of popular sentiment.

Twice during this struggle National Administrations have notably upheld the National Policy. President Wilson upheld it when he refused to sign the Federal Power Act until leaders of both parties in Congress had promised Secretary Payne that a bill would be introduced into the next Congress to remove National Parks and Monuments from its jurisdiction. And the following administration did it, first, by Secretary Work's initial brief statement, second, by the Federal Power Commission's denial of power filings in the proposed Roosevelt-Sequoia National Park on June 15 last, and, third, by President Harding's statement in Yellowstone last July.

In both instances Administration commitment followed expressions of popular sentiment from all over the country, and it seems probable to us that the popular desire sooner or later will build up in Congress a tradition which will insure eventual safety.

The people have won the fights, with one exception, but they have not yet won victory.

On the eve of the fourth year of the defense, let us, therefore, restate the National Policy.

Definition of National Parks

National Parks are areas of publicly-owned lands "set aside by the American Government to be maintained untouched by the inroads of modern civilization" (Work) because they possess scenic significance of a quality to attract and itself hold national attention; or because they contain extraordinary remains of prehistoric civilization; or because they contain extraordinary examples of natural forests and other forms of wild life.

The Objects of National Parks

The objects of National Parks are, first, to conserve these extraordinary exhibits as completely as museums conserve precious specimens; second, to apply them to the uses of education and science; and, third, to fit them and use them for the recreation and enjoyment of their owners, the people.

OHIO WOMEN OPEN FIGHT TO SAVE NATIONAL PARKS

State Federation of Women's Clubs Petition Congress to Maintain Scenic Standards and Defeat Commercialism

At the turn of the tide of battle from defense to aggression, the Ohio Federation of Women's Clubs is leading the attack.

On October 11, at a meeting at Cleveland, the State Federation passed the following resolution:

"*Whereas*, Our National Parks System represents to our people and to the whole world the supreme majesty of American landscape, and has therefore become the visible symbol of the country's greater beauty among the countries of the world; and

"*Whereas*, it has been conserved by law from every other use than the enjoyment, the inspiration and the education of the people, and therefore represents the idealism which is so strong an element in American character; and

"*Whereas*, its faithful preservation for higher uses during years of frantic material expansion against determined attempts of powerful interests to possess it makes it an inspiration to all citizens to pride in our great nation's greatness of spirit, and restores faith in the people's power; therefore, be it

"*Resolved*, That the Ohio Federation of Women's Clubs urges Congress to admit to this System no National Parks of less than the lofticst standards, to permit no invasion whatever by industrialism, to cleanse it of past irregularities and to withdraw all power from others than Congress itself to control its complete conservation."

An Appeal to the President from Marion

Meantime, District Federations all over Ohio were passing resolutions of their own of similar import.

On November 16 the Chairman of the Central District wrote the following letter to President Coolidge:

"HONORABLE PRESIDENT:

At the Central District meeting of the Ohio Federation of Women's Clubs at Marion, Ohio, October 24, the enclosed resolution was passed, and we trust that it will receive your serious consideration, as we feel that it echoes the sentiments of our late beloved President, Warren G. Harding, whose death was no doubt hastened through his interest in the subject of Conservation, which interest was evidenced by his speeches in Alaska. He pledged himself on the eve of his election and at the beginning of his last journey to National Parks integrity."

The National Parks System

With the creation of the National Parks Service in 1916, National Parks ceased to be isolated areas and became a System. The National Parks System, under the tradition of the Government policy of past years and the definite purposes of the people of the country today, is a system or collection of the finest examples, most representative of the country, carefully chosen out of many possibilities.

The historic and popular conception of the National Parks System, it will be noted, is that of a gallery of masterpieces; necessarily it must be restricted in the future, as it has been in the past, to the noblest examples only, be they few or many, of the various includable kinds.

While it is conceivable that many other public areas may usefully be conserved, that is one thing and creating a majestic, well-balanced National Parks System is another. The two must not be confused.

Congress has created other classes of conserved areas, such as national monuments, game refuges and bird sanctuaries, and it can create still other classes if the need arises. No reason exists for distorting the sublime architectural proportions of the National Parks System, which is now, like a colossal cathedral, entering the third generation of its upbuilding in accord with a long matured plan.

The National Parks Service

To carry on this inspiring design during our generation and keep it disentangled from the designs of industrialists and local business interests on the one hand, and of sentimentalists and the one-idea kind of conservationists on the other, an expert national authority is required whose rulings on the fitness of areas proposed to be included shall be final except as modified by Congress itself.

By law and common consent, this authority is the National Park Service of the Interior Department. It is the duty of the people to protect the National Park Service from political and other pressures tending to disturb its calm judgment and force its hand, and from the propaganda of those who wish to alter the historic conception in furtherance of ideas or purposes of their own.

National Park Making

Our National Park making, therefore, like cathedral building in succeeding generations, is the very serious business of educated and widely experienced Government specialists.

The choice of areas necessary to be added so that the completed system shall be well-balanced in respect to scenic and scientific proportioning, educational utility, geographical representation and recreational adaptability, and the determination of boundaries to satisfy these manifold uses and administrative needs, require judgment and skill of the highest order obtainable.

The National Park Service and its administrative forces in the field should be kept always, as in the past, absolutely out of politics.

Range of Choice

So special a public need requires that the entire range of publicly-owned lands should remain open, as in the past, for the choice of additions for the completion of this unique, world-famous national structure.

The only restriction of choice should be economic; Congress alone must determine whether any area desired by the National Park Service for the perfection of its plan is more valuable to the Nation for this or other purposes.

Recreational Development

No future utilization of the public lands for recreational purposes must be permitted to affect the plan and development of the National Parks System. From its nature, a National Park is usually capable of the very highest type of recreational development, but it does not follow that areas developed for recreational purposes must be National Parks. The fundamental conditions differ. Areas developed primarily for recreation do not require complete conservation.

National Monuments

National Monuments, which are usually but not necessarily small in area, are created under the Antiquities Act to conserve areas or objects possessing extraordinary archaeological, historic or scientific value. The Grand Canyon was once a National Monument for scientific reasons. The Mount Olympus National Monument was created to preserve the Olympic elk. A National Monument conserves a perfect cinder cone in New Mexico. Many National Monuments conserve ruins of prehistoric civilization and the Spanish invasion. One conserves a deserted native village built within history in Alaska. Several mark the paths of early exploration.

National Monuments are created by Presidential proclamation upon representations of fitness presented through Departments of Government. By custom they are assigned for administration to the Department which, prior to establishment, controlled the land they cover. So far National Monuments have been assigned for administration to the Departments of the Interior, Agriculture and War. Those under the Interior Department are conserved like National Parks.

Standard of Fitness

No standard of fitness has been established for the National Monuments to which all Departments are required to conform. Each determines standard in its own way, and perhaps it is good fortune only that a system created in so haphazard a manner has remained so uniformly good. Few needs are more important than that some capable responsible referee be assigned to pass upon the qualifications of all proposed National Monuments. Unless this is done before it becomes generally discovered that National Monuments bring fame and hundreds or thousands of visitors to localities possessing them, local ambition using political pressure may easily debase and ruin the ideal.

While it is true that the Grand Canyon and Lafayette National Parks were originally National Monuments, this has no significance in National Park building. The one classification is not to be conceived as a stepping stone to the other. If the National Park Service finds any National Monument useful for the completion of its National Park structure, it will apply to Congress for permission so to use it, in the same way as it applies for a necessary area in the National Forest or elsewhere in the public lands.

STIMULUS TO PATRIOTISM.

"These great parks," says Stephen T. Mather, Director of the National Park Service of the Interior Department, in his annual report, "bringing together such throngs of visitors hailing from every State and Territory, within such surroundings, do more toward stimulation of National pride and contentment than any other agency under control of the Government."